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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REALIA

[Read at the Fifth Annual Meeting of our Association, December 30, 1921,
Washington, D. C.]

The committee appointed to delineate the matter that can be profitably used in teaching, during the first two years in Spanish, the geography, history, institutions and customs of the Spanish countries,—all of which is designated by the term “*realia*,”—begs leave to present the following statement:

ADVANTAGES OF *REALIA* SUBJECT-MATTER

Your committee takes it for granted that all teachers of Spanish are agreed as to the advisability of employing *realia* subject-matter as the best means of making their instruction more lively, more real, and more interesting, experience having shown conclusively that in order to impart to the learner a true liking for the language, our subject-matter must be drawn from the real things with which the peoples speaking Spanish are directly concerned: their countries, their customs, their ideals, their means of livelihood, besides their language and literature. By this means, a sympathetic attitude is created on the part of the pupil, not only toward Spanish but also toward the Hispanic nations, and it is hoped that by thus promoting this sympathy in our school pupils, a better understanding and closer union will be established between the United States and the Hispanic countries.

REALIA IN THE FIRST YEAR

During the first year the learner's attention must, of course, be focused mainly upon linguistic matters—the acquiring of a good pronunciation, the mastery of the elements of grammar, of forms, and of fundamental constructions, vocabulary building; while, on the other hand, the subject-matter for this preliminary instruction must be based principally upon material in and around the student's immediate surroundings, such as objects in the classroom, the parts of the body, articles of clothing, etc.

But it is possible and desirable to introduce some *realia* material from the very first day, even though in very moderate doses. For instance, in teaching pronunciation, the paradigms for drill may be words connected with the Spanish countries, such as geographical names (España, Argentina, Chile, Habana, etc.), adjectives of na-

tionality (español, argentino, chileno), names of coins (peseta, peso, duro, libra, boliviano), etc., and in laying the first foundations for building the learner's vocabulary the use of maps with Spanish legends can be introduced early, and the most elemental geographical data can be given effectively, such as the names of Spanish countries, their situation, boundaries, etc.

A discussion of the above topics furnishes ample and adequate material for the teaching of the differences between *ser* and *estar*, the cardinal points, the comparatives, etc.

Later, the following may be taken up: principal products of each country, their principal industries and exports; then the regional divisions of Spain, the names of the aboriginal settlers of the Peninsula, the principal races in the Spanish-American countries.

Experience has shown that the occasional injection of these elemental *realia* topics, even if they are not an integral part of the lesson assigned in the text, provides excellent and most interesting material for oral work and effectively breaks the monotony of formal grammar instruction or of the routine in the recitation; that it is a great factor in enlivening the interest of the class is self-evident.

The subject of customs is best introduced by means of articles in actual national use, such as coins, railway and street-car tickets, pictures of national types, etc.

It is the feeling of the committee that in the first year it would not be advisable to introduce historical facts, except a few of the most salient, and these can best be discussed with the help of pictures.

Whenever national music is available as an aid to instruction, Spanish and Spanish-American songs should be sung at least once a week, during the first ten minutes or so of the recitation period.

Your committee recommends also, as an effective device for *realia* instruction, the periodical use of typical Spanish games. In this connection, it is hoped that publishers in this country will soon make available in suitable form a collection of such games.

The most valuable *realia* for use in the first year are pictures. Whether to teach vocabulary, to serve as a basis for conversation, or as illustrations for material found in grammar or reader, pictures of scenes in Spain, and Spanish America, portraits of famous Spanish characters, picture postcards, reproductions of great works of art, and anything else that is suitable and available should be freely used.

It is doubtful whether it would be advisable to present *realia* material in a systematic manner during the first year, bearing in mind, as pointed out in the beginning, the more important subjects for instruction that have first claim to attention in classroom work, and also on account of the learner's lack of vocabulary; but the occasional or frequent use of such elemental *realia* topics as have been referred to under this heading is not only practicable but highly desirable.

REALIA IN THE SECOND YEAR

The use of *realia* material is particularly appropriate to the work of the second year of high-school Spanish. Before taking up the more difficult literary texts, and as a preparation and a background for appreciating them, the learner should be made acquainted with such *realia* material as will link up his knowledge of Spanish with his everyday environment, and especially with the geography, institutions, and customs of the Spanish countries.

The learner should be led to feel himself in mental contact with peoples who are spiritually akin to him, and with whom the United States are in an increasingly intimate political, social, and commercial relationship.

The presentation and treatment of *realia* material in the second year should be a systematical amplification of the topics introduced in the first year, and may cover points such as: form of government, political divisions, names of provinces, foreign trade, regional characteristics of the peninsular peoples, national characteristics of the Spanish-American republics, salient facts of history, etc.

Whenever available, greater use should be made of *realia* articles—such as those listed under the respective heading in a later part of this report—for a more extended discussion of customs, institutions, etc.

At least one novel and play of customs and manners should be read in the second year, and these, if properly chosen with due regard for their background and local color, will at the same time serve as *realia* material of the highest order.

OUTLINE REALIA SUBJECT-MATTER

In order to facilitate the proper selection and organization of *realia* subject-matter, your Committee begs leave to submit the following outline:

I. Geographical data: (1) Names of Spanish countries, (2) Situation and boundaries, (3) Capitals and other important cities and

principal ports, (4) Population and races, (5) Principal rivers and mountains.

II. Historical facts—(a) As to Spain: (1) First inhabitants, (2) The Roman, the Visigoth, and the Arabian dominations, (3) The reconquest—Don Pelayo, El Cid, Campeador, (4) The conquest of Granada—Ferdinand and Isabella, El Gran Capitán, (5) The discovery of America, (6) The Hapsburg dynasty—Charles V, Philip II, (7) The Bourbon dynasty—Charles III, Ferdinand VII, (8) Napoleon and the War of Independence, (9) The revolt of the colonies, (10) Present-day facts—Alfonso XIII; (b) As to the Spanish-American Republics: (1) The discovery—Columbus, Pinzón, (2) Pre-Colombian civilization—The Aztecs, The Incas, etc., (3) Period of exploration and conquest—Ponce de León, Gonzáles de Córdoba, Balboa, Pizarro, Cortés, Valdivia, etc., (4) Colonization—El Padre Las Casas, Mendoza, Solís, (5) Spanish colonial rule—Viceroys, captains-general, governors, etc., (6) The struggle for independence, (7) Leading national heroes—Bolívar, San Martín, O'Higgins, Hidalgo, Artigas, etc., (8) Present-day facts.

III. Political data: (1) Forms of government, (2) Political divisions, (3) Institutions, (4) Education, (5) Religion.

IV. Economic data: (1) Resources and products, (2) Industries, (3) Agriculture, (4) Mining, (5) Commerce, (6) Railroads and other means of communication, (7) Commercial intercourse with the United States.

V. Customs and manners: (1) National and regional characteristics, (2) National legends and folk-lore, (3) National and popular songs and dances, (4) Festivals, sports, amusements, (5) Principal occupations, (6) Family and social life, (7) National foods.

DECORATION OF THE CLASSROOM

It is hardly necessary to state that for the effective use of *realia* subject-matter, the Spanish classroom should be suitably decorated with maps of the Spanish-speaking nations, plans of the principal cities, typical scenes of urban and rural life, portraits of national heroes, statesmen, and writers. A room thus decorated not only furnishes the Hispanic atmosphere, but also provides the teacher with an effective device for keeping alive the interest of the class; when the learner's attention shows signs of weariness the teacher can instantly resort with excellent results to a picture connected in some way with the lesson.

AVAILABILITY OF *REALIA* MATERIAL

While the general tendency in textbooks is more and more toward the inclusion of *realia* subject-matter, and many of the works published in recent years abound in this kind of material, it is, however, to be regretted that there are not available in this country adequate classroom pictures and suitable collections of *realia* articles, as those listed further, that could be readily and generally obtained by teachers of Spanish.

Your committee, therefore, suggests, as a means of securing such collections that the President of the Association be empowered to appoint early in the spring of each year a committee of three, to be chosen from members who are to spend the summer in Spain, whose duty shall be to secure *realia* articles for such teachers as may request them so to do. The names and addresses of the members constituting such a committee to be published in HISPANIA with sufficient anticipation of their departure.

LIST OF *REALIA* ARTICLES

The following list includes, it is hoped, the principal articles of *realia*, with at least a number of which the Spanish classroom should be provided:

<i>Printed</i>	<i>Manufactured</i>
Periodicals	National toys
Tickets—	Fans
Theatre	Typical articles of
Railroad	clothing—
Street car	Mantillas
Telegram forms	Mantones
Postage stamps	Sombreros
Calendars	Boinas
Wedding invitations and other social announcements	Fajas
Bills of fare	Alpargatas
Programs	Ponchos
Posters	Zuecos, etc.
Advertisements	Miniature models
Articles of food—	of Botijos,
Garbanzos	Ollas, etc.
Frijoles	Candles, and
Pasas	other household
Turrones, etc.	articles
	Guitars
	Castanets
	Mate and bombilla, etc.

<i>Decorative</i>	<i>Industrial Samples</i>
Maps	Mat-weed
Globes	Cork
Plans of cities	Hemp
Pictures of :	Henequen
Buildings	Coffee
Works of Art	Cacao
Rural scenes	Sugar
Urban scenes	Yerba mate
National types	Rubber
Portraits of :	Iron
Heroes	Nitrate
Statesmen	Silver
Writers	Copper
Picture postcards	Tin, etc
Flags and Coats of Arms of the Spanish coun- tries.	

STEREOPTICON SLIDES AND MOVING PICTURES

Your committee wishes to draw the attention of the Association to the great possibilities of the use of stereopticon slides and moving pictures as one of the best means of effectively presenting *realia* subject-matter, and suggests the advisability of the Association's taking up the matter of production of *realia* slides and films for school use with such concerns as may become interested.

REFERENCE BOOKS

In order to facilitate the search for the data called for in the outline, the committee has deemed it better to list only some of the books to which the teachers may refer, instead of giving a long list of books on Spain and Spanish America. For all practical purposes of instruction, the following contain abundant information which can be easily summarized by the teacher for classroom use:

On Spain: *Geografía de España y Portugal* (Libro III), by J. Palau Valera, Seix y Barral Hermanos, Barcelona; *Compendio de Geografía Especial de España*, by A. Moreno Espinosa, Barcelona; *Compendio de Historia de España*, by same; *La Educación del Ciudadano*, by J. Palau Valera, Seix y Barral Hermanos, Barcelona.

On Spanish America: *Las Repúblicas Hispano-Americanas*, by E. H. del Villar, Publicaciones Calpe, Barcelona, (2 Vols.). *Geografía Comercial de los Naciones Latino-Americanas*, by E. Santi-

báñez, Appleton; *Historia de la América Latina*, by same, Appleton; *Atlas de la América Latina*, Brentano.

Your committee feels that it can not make definite recommendations as to the method of presentation and treatment, inasmuch as this must, of course, depend upon the particular conditions and facilities of each school and individual teacher.

In conclusion, your committee wishes to be placed on record as being fully aware of the dangers of overdoses of *realia* to the detriment of other points and considerations which are equally important in our teaching; and we beg to summarize our findings as follows:

(1) That *realia* in the first year should be introduced as early as possible, but used only incidentally;

(2) That in the second year, *realia* may constitute the principal subject-matter for instruction, as a preparation for the literary study of the language;

(3) That *realia* articles not being available in this country, steps should be taken by the Association for helping teachers to secure suitable collections.

Respectfully submitted,

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